

—Prince Eulenburg and Prince Fiirstenberg, though the latter never won the place in his master's heart that the fascinating Phili had possessed. Neither of them, however, was long in his company at any one time, and neither knew very much at first hand of his graver political activities. For twelve years Billow was the trusted adviser of the monarch, who enjoyed the society of the most brilliant conversationalist in Germany, and heaped upon him public and private marks of favour. Even if we make allowances for the fact that the fallen statesman is paying off old scores, the picture emerges of a man who was tragically unfit to rule a mighty empire.

That Billow's indictment of William *TL* never extends to the political system which he inherited is a measure of his limitations ; for the English reader, reared in the bracing tradition of self-government, is aware in every chapter that the real culprit was rather the constitution than the man. The Prince repeatedly declares himself a royalist, and there is no reason to doubt his assertion that he always strove to maintain the prerogatives of the Crown ; but on his own showing the result 'was a lamentable failure. The experience of England and other free countries proves that power cannot be permanently divided between Monarch and Parliament: one or the other must win the struggle. The Constitution of the German Empire, as drawn up by Bismarck, worked fairly well so long as he was at the helm, for everyone knew that he alone was in command. With weaker Chancellors and an Emperor determined to assert himself, the unified control which is equally vital to an autocratic and a democratic government came to an end. Billow's political philosophy repudiated constitutional monarchy, but demanded that the ruler should always possess

and give ear to wise Ministers. That these conditions were unlikely to be filled is clear from a narrative which roundly condemns the mistakes of his predecessors and successors. In his well-known work, *Rjegitrun und Volkswtlk*, published shortly before the war of 1914-1918, Professor Hans Delbrück glorified the German Constitution as the ideal compromise between autocracy and democracy. On paper it was doubtless well enough, but it could only succeed by a combination of factors which hardly ever synchronized. The Kaiser reserved certain subjects, such as the size of the navy* for his exclusive decision, and the Opposition parties in the Reichstag clamoured for further instalments of democracy. In the most perfectly organized of European States, as